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**Minutes of the 151st meeting of the SCRR Executive Committee**

**2nd February 2023 online via Zoom**

In attendance:

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| Geoff Simm, GS (Chair) | Stuart Monro, SM |
| Sarah Skerratt, SS | Willie Donachie, WD |
| Lyndsey Hayes, LH (Minutes) | Kathy Velander, KV |
| Alexandra Davey, AD | Karen Halliday, KH |
| Nick Fraser, NF |  |

1. **Welcome & Apologies**

GS welcomed all and noted apologies from David Miller, Des Thompson, Lee Innes, Tracy Shimmield and David Hopkins.

Minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting held on 5th October and AGM held on 17 November 2022 were accepted.

1. **SCRR strategic direction**

Feedback was given from meetings of the theme sub-groups:

1. **Networking / connecting/showcasing** (LI/NF/GS)

GS noted LI recorded minutes which had been circulated as PAPER 1. NF added need to understand rural sphere events in Scotland. Communication within individual organisations needs improvement, and how ECRs can get involved with SCRR. Internal work to be done first. Positive step to link Peter Wilson Lecture (PWL) with Early Career Researcher (ECR) event. SS commented on need to identify criteria if doing a mapping exercise. GS stated we need clarity on own identity and who we are trying to reach first.

1. **ECRs** (SS/KH)

SS described discussion held around need for separate ECR group. Start small to build community. Help them build terms of reference, grow ideas and how these will benefit them plus map onto SCRR purpose. One ECR to report into Executive Committee. ECRs to act as ambassadors for SCRR/network at conferences and events. Give them recognition and a platform to take control of events, which could be online. Small budget possible for travel etc. KH sees this as a natural way to bring in diversity, which could lead to creation of an ECR diversity award.

GS spoke to PAPER 2, noting he and LH met with some ECRs on the Easterbush campus. Their comments point to the fact that SCRR research should be global, though they thought opposite to this from name, so profile raising required. They stressed that contacting them directly is important. They were supportive of SCRR providing travel grants to attend events and less so of SCRR providing training opportunities (though GS noted may be central belt bias). Most enthusiastic about something similar to SULSA award.

1. **Mapping / gap analysis** (DM/NF/TS)

NF spoke to DM’s paper circulated just prior to the meeting. Hard to define ‘what is rural research’. Good to get a student on board to carry out questionnaire to identify possible networks and general landscape. Difficult to define where to stop / who to involve. Felt needed to be global to start with.

NF spoke to DTP people, noting lots of students there are working in rural environment, but not mapped. Questionnaire needed to assess what goes on in individual institutions, where networks are and what SCRR can do to strengthen and advocate. SM agreed with identifying landscape. Likes GS suggestion ‘rural research done IN Scotland, rather than ON Scotland’. SS feels process as important as output as will raise profile. Would be an important piece of work to commission, as would achieve number of our goals and identify/create networks. GS wondered about engagement on surveys and perhaps should combine with web searches and talking to humans in institutions. Combining ECR with an Executive group member and proving expenses to help carry this out. WD felt it important to give ECRs some autonomy. KH added it seems to her that mapping / ECR networks are two roles. She gave examples of how has managed interns etc. with planning, monitoring and helping open doors through a regularly managed process. Would require commitment from some committee members and a clear project brief. KH considered best timelines – over summer or in time for May event?

GS suggested step 1 is to get ECR reps from each institution appointed and have a workshop with the full group perhaps around the PWL on 23 May. All agreed good way forward to seek ECR reps and invite to workshop. In parallel SCRR could appoint intern to do some mapping and inform the workshop. SS queried if we are confident we have the reach into ECR networks in institutions, given key point was ECRs said to bypass Executive and go direct. Suggestion was made to have 2-3 ECRs alternating to Executive Committee.

ACTION: SS/LH/GS to draft text about seeking ECR reps for all to circulate.

Discussion took place on global reach of SCRR. It was agreed to be inclusive ‘working IN Scotland on issues which may be global’. The statement ‘We represent institutions that work IN Scotland on rural issues where they may matter elsewhere in the world’ was suggested. KH feels that ‘rural’ is the issue, as the term may seem outdated for some. How SRUC market themselves well was given as an example. It was agreed that imagery could be used to define ‘rural’ rather than words. SS noted Leslie Mabon talking about aerospace etc. at last year’s PWL. KH suggested we could commission an art project through ECA students or ECR photo competition to generate images SCRR could use and offer a prize. Would need a judge. AD stated could host an art exhibition at the Royal Botanic Gardens. It was also suggested that an artist could be invited to capture images of the ECR workshop discussion to be displayed as part of the follow on PWL.

SS suggested theme of ‘what is 21st century rural’ as working topic for PWL, with diverse, quick-fire speakers being 5 minutes each. It was noted that SCRR turns 75 years old in 2023, so we could also look forward 75 years to ‘what rural will look like in 2098’. SS suggested RSE could invite Leslie Mabon to be speaker host. All greed to join PWL with ECR event on 23 May and make ECR event a facilitated workshop.

ACTION: KH to investigate art possibilities with ECA contacts.

ACTION: SS to ask RSE to invite Leslie Mabon as host for PWL.

ACTION: All to feed in speaker suggestions for PWL (who will appeal to ECRs) to LH before 17th Feb.

ACTION: LH to arrange short follow-on meeting to finalise planning for PWL/ECR workshop.

1. **Doctoral Training Centers**

Advantages of linking were raised by KH during the AGM. Noted that they are about diversifying career paths and we could run an SCRR workshop for then. Agreed to see what emerges from ECR network drive and have DTCs as an item on our shopping list for more engagement in future.

1. **Membership**

LH noted Christine Braban as the new SCRR member contact for UKCEH, replacing Stefan Reiss.

1. **Events**

PWL / ECR event covered in discussions above.

LH noted thanks on behalf of the Executive Committee to TS and colleagues for hosting an excellent lunch event at the British Geological Survey in January.

1. **Discussion on written member updates**

Updates in online document noted.

ACTION: LH to add SM St. Andrew’s email address for access to online document.

1. **Finances**

LH in the process of generating and sending out invoices for 2023 annual membership fees.

1. **Publicity & communications**

Deadline for next newsletter articles to be sent to LH was set as 24 Feb, but LH suggested extending this to allow details of the PWL and ECR event to be featured in the newsletter.

Similarly, banner stand development to be postponed so can incorporate art and images.

LH noted some recent issues with website which have required web designer input to fix. LH also working with Damien to update map featured on website.

ACTION: LH to investigate copyright for images generated as part of competition.

1. **Any other business**

SM updated on webinar, which will be discussed by public engagement at the RSE next week.

NF noted DT had asked about stakeholder meeting on 9th March – NF will talk to DT on this.

1. **Date of next meeting**

27 April, 10.30-12.00 (Hybrid meeting at Easterbush Campus with online Zoom joining option). *Followed by a Members Lunch hosted by the Global Academy of Agriculture and Food Systems.*